

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-12

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R 231856Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6874

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BURSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 6438

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: VICTOR REUTHER AND FORMER AMBASSADOR STEPHANSKY MEET
WITH SPANISH LABOR LEADERS

REF: (A) STATE 189502, (B) MADRID 6132

SUMMARY. DURING THEIR STAY IN SPAIN, REUTHER AND
STEPHANSKY MET WITH DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION LABOR LEADERS
IN BARCELONA AND MADRID. IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS WITH
EMBASSY, THEY EMPHASIZED A) DEFINITE FEELING ON SPANISH
SIDE THAT U.S. LABOR WAS STILL REMAINING SOMEWHAT ALOOF
FROM EMERGING FREE UNIONS AND B) SHORTAGE OF FUNDS FOR
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BADLY NEEDED LABOR EDUCATION AND ORGANIZING EFFORTS.

FROM POINT OF VIEW BOTH U.S. VISITORS AND SPANISH LABOR LEADERS, VISIT WAS MOST WORTHWHILE AND APPRECIATED. COMMENTS FROM ANY ADDRESSEES RE GENERAL MATTER OF FOREIGN FREE TRADE UNION ASSISTANCE TO SPANISH DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION LABOR MOVEMENT WOULD BE APPRECIATED. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING THE COURSE OF THEIR STAYS IN BARCELONA AND MADRID, REUTHER AND STEPHANSKY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF MEETING WITH THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION LABOR GROUPS. IN BARCELONA, UGT LEADER AND LABOR LAWYER RODOLFO GUERRA (A 1975 IVP GRANTEE) ARRANGED WHAT BOTH U.S. VISITORS CHARACTERIZED AS A MOST WORTHWHILE JOINT MEETING (FIRST WEEK OF AUGUST) WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UGT, CNT (CONFEDERACION NACIONAL DE TRABAJO), AND SOC (SOLIDARIDAD DE OBREROS DE CATALUNA). IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT EARLIER THIS MONTH THESE THREE UNIONS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO FORM A REGIONAL ALLIANCE (ALIANZA SINDICAL DE CATALUNA) WHICH MANY OBSERVERS HAVE INTERPRETED AS A DIRECT LOCAL CHALLENGE TO THE COS (COORDINADORA OBRERA SINDICAL - THE NATIONAL "UNITY OF ACTION" COORDINATION MECHNISM GROUPING THE UGT, USO, AND THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSIONS: SWC).

2. IN MADRID, REUTHER TOLD US INITIALLY THAT IMF REPRESENTATIVE CARLOS PARDO (UGT) WAS ARRANGING A MEETING WITH THE UGT. THE LABATT SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE POLITIC NOT TO IGNORE SPAIN'S SECOND LARGEST FREE TRADE UNION, THE SOCIAL CHRISTIAN USO (UNION SINDICAL OBRERA). REUTHER READILY AGREED, AND PARDO SUBSEQUENTLY SET UP BACK-TO-BACK MEETINGS (AUGUST 17) WITH UGT (SECGEN NICOLAS REDONDO, ORGANIZING SECRETARY ANTONIO GARCIA, AND TWO OTHERS) AND USO (EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER MARIANO ESPUNEZ AND TWO USO COLLEAGUES FROM THE NETAL-WORKERS).

3. BOTH REUTHER AND STEPHANSKY TOLD US THAT THEY HAD BEEN MOST FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH THE CALIBER AND SOPHISTICATION OF THE LABOR LEADERS THEY HAD MET, ESPECIALLY THE UGT'S REDONDO. IN PASSING ON SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE USG AND USO MEETINGS, THE U.S. VISITORS SAID THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY HAD DETECTED A VERY DEFINITE FEELING ON THE PART OF THE SPANISH TRADE UNIONISTS (PARTICULARLY UGT) THAT U.S. LABOR WAS STILL REMAINING SOMEWHAT ALOOF FROM THE EMERGING DEMOCRATIC UNIONS IN SPAIN. WHILE THE SPANIARDS APPRECIATED THE INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS, INCLUDING AMERICAN, THEY ENJOYED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIAT (ITS) CHANNELS (ESPECIALLY IMF), THEY WERE APPARENTLY ANXIOUS TO HAVE MORE UNION-TO-UNION CONTACT

WITH U.S. COUNTERPARTS.

4. IT HAD BEEN CLEAR THAT BOTH THE UGT AND USO WERE SUFFERING SEVERE GROWING PAINS IN TERMS OF LACK OF FINANCES FOR BADLY NEEDED LABOR EDUCATION AND ORGANIZING EFFORTS. REDONDO HAD POINTEDLY NOTED THAT THE SWC WAS RECEIVING EXTENSIVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE WFTU AND COMMUNIST LABOR SOURCES IN FRANCE, ITALY, AND EASTERN EUROPE. IN ASTURIAS ALONE, HE SAID, THE SWC HAD MORE ORGANIZERS THAN THE UGT HAD NATIONWIDE.

5. REUTHER SAID THAT HE HAD GOTTEN THE IMPRESSION THAT THE UGT WAS MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN THE USO THAT THE EMPLOYERS WOULD ACT "RESPONSIBLY" IN COMING LABOR MANAGEMENT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS NEGOTIATIONS. HE ATTRIBUTED THIS TO A POSSIBLE FEELING OF INSECURITY ON THE PART OF THE WEAKER USO WHICH HE BELIEVED MIGHT BE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO YELLOW DOG UNIONS IN THEIR SMALL-PLANT STRONGHOLDS. REUTHER ALSO RECOUNTED THAT HE HAD MADE IT A POINT TO TELL BOTH THE UGT AND USO THAT THEY SHOULD NOT NEGLECT UNIONIZATION IN THE AGRARIAN SECTOR, A FIELD WHICH THE POLITICAL RIGHT TRADITIONALLY CONTROLLED.

6. ALTHOUGH THE U.S. VISITORS WERE BASICALLY ON A VACATION TRIP, SPANISH LABOR CONTACTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THEIR SEVERAL GET-TOGETHERS WITH VARIOUS TRADE UNIONS WERE MOST WORTHWHILE AND APPRECIATED. THE REFERENCE TO THE "ALOOFNESS" OF U.S. LABOR IS LIKELY DIRECTED AT THE AFL-CIO INASMUCH AS THE UAW HAS SHOWN A STRONG INTEREST IN SPAIN (THE RECENT VISITS OF REBHAN, WOODCOCK, AND NOW REUTHER). COMMENTING TO THE EMBASSY ON THE MATTER OF POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, REUTHER SPECULATED THAT THE IMF'S SOLIDARITY FUND WAS PROBABLY CONFIDENTIAL

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QUITE LIMITED. HOWEVER, HE SUGGESTED THAT SOME OF THE MORE AFFLUENT U.S. MEMBER UNIONS OF THE IMF (AND PERHAPS SOME SCANDINAVIAN AND GERMAN MEMBERS AS WELL) MIGHT CONSIDER SUPPORTING CERTAIN SPECIFIC SPANISH TRADE UNION PROJECTS, FOR EXAMPLE IN THE FIELD OF LABOR EDUCATION. HE SUSPECTED THAT WEST GERMANY'S IG METALL WAS ALREADY SUBSIDIZING DISTRIBUTION IN SPANISH FREE LABOR CIRCLES OF A SLICK MONTHLY MAGAZINE CALLED EXPRES ESPANOL. WE HAVE SINCE HEARD FROM A PSOE (SOCIALIST PARTY). SOURCE THAT THE GERMAN SDP'S FREDERICH EBERT STIFTUNG (FES) IS SETTING UP AN OFFICE IN MADRID, WHICH COULD SIGNIFY GREATER FUTURE AID TO THE UGT AS WELL AS TO THE PSOE.

7. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT, USCE BRUSSELS,

BONN, SCANDINAVIAN ADDRESSEES, US MISSION GENEVA, OR
OTHER INTERESTED ADDRESSEES ON THE GENERAL MATTER OF
FOREIGN FREE TRADE UNION ASSISTANCE (PLANNED OR ACTUAL)
TO THE SPANISH DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION LABOR MOVEMENT
WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
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